(b) if so, at what rates gas is being sold to these sectors;

(c) whether Government has formulated a proposal to increase this price; and

(d) if so, what is the proposed hike in the price?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) GAIL (India) Limited supplies natural gas to fertilizers sector for use as fuel and feedstock.

(b) Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM) gas is sold at Rs. 3200 per Thousand Standard Cubic Metres (MSCM) out side the North-East and at Rs. 1920/MSCM in the North-East. Apart from that gas from other sources is supplied at market rate.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Strategic crude oil reserve

584. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE
SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has recently taken a decision to build up a strategic crude oil reserve of 5 million metric tonnes in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the total investment likely to be made for the purpose;

(c) whether Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB) will fund for building strategic crude oil reserves; and

(d) if so, the time by which such strategic crude oil reserves would be established?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The Government has decided in September, 2005 to set up strategic storage of crude oil of 5 MMT capacity at 3 locations *viz.* Vizag (1.0 MMT), Mangalore (1.5 MMT) and Padur, Udipi (2.5 MMT). The estimated capital cost (as per September, 2005 prices) was Rs. 2397 crores and the crude filling cost Rs. 8870 crores (based on the then crude price of $ 55 per barrel).

(c) Yes, Sir. OIDB will finance the cost of building the strategic storage. To meet the cost of crude, the Government could consider a temporary increase in the cess on domestic crude and/or customs duty on imported crude, if necessary.

(d) The completion targets for estalishing the strategic crude oil reserves are mentioned below:

Visakhapatnam	:	January 31, 2011
Mangalore	:	July 15, 2011
Padur	:	December 31, 2011

*MMT denotes Million Metric Tonnes

LPG connections in Rajasthan

585. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:
SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any waiting list of subscribers intending to have LPG connections in Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when this waiting list is expected to be cleared;

(c) the total number of LPG connections sanctioned in Rajasthan, the total monthly supply of LPG cylinders; and

(d) how this shortage is to be met?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) The enrolment of new LPG customers and release of new LPG connections is a continuous process. Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported that at present, new LPG connections are available across the counter for genuine domestic customers on verification of documents as per laid down procedure. OMCs have reported that as on 1.2.2008, they were serving 40.8 lakh LPG customers in the State of Rajasthan.

OMCs have further reported that as on 1.2.2008 they have released 2.3 lakh new LPG connectios in the State of Rajasthan during the period from April, 2007—January, 2008 as against 1.8 lakh connections during the corresponding period of last year. OMCs have not reported any waiting list pending with them for release of new domestic LPG connections in the State of Rajasthan as on 1.2.2008.

OMCs have also reported that they have supplied 364.59 thousand metric tonnes of LPG in the State of Rajasthan during the period April, 2007—January, 2008.

Hike in Price of petrol and kerosene

586. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:
SHRI S. ANBALAGAN:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has increased the rates of petrol and diesel recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the comparative details of price hike in petrol and kerosene during the last three years; and

(d) the steps Government would like to take to protect the interests of common man?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The international prices of crude oil and petroleum products have remained high and volatile. In April 2007, the Indian basket was priced at $ 65.5 per barrel, which rose to $ 89.5 per barrel in January 2008 and is currently at its highest level of $ 96 per barrel (on 27.2.2008). As passing on the entire impact of the steep increase in the oil prices to the consumers would have resulted in hardship to the common man, the retail selling prices of sensitive petroleum products namely petrol, diesel, PDS kerosene and domestic LPG have not been increased in tandem with the international oil prices. The Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are, as such, incurring under-recoveries on domestic sale of these sensitive petroleum products. To deal with the steep escalation in international oil prices, the Government has adopted the principle of